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Kumar Sangakkara's one other major assignment off the pitch – an uplifting message for Johannesburg's Tembisa children

Johannesburg 12 September 2007 - Leading Sri Lanka cricketer Kumar Sangakkara and other team mates taking part in the ICC World Twenty20 in South Africa, have one other major assignment off the pitch – to campaign for children's needs and rights in the global fight against HIV and AIDS.

Today, 12 September 2007, they take the campaign to Johannesburg's Tembisa Township where they will give a coaching clinic to children on how the values of sport, in particular cricket can help mitigate the situation of millions of children living with and affected by HIV and AIDS. The coaching clinic is part of the series of initiatives borne out of the ICC, UNICEF and UNAIDS partnership to raise awareness of HIV and AIDS, especially among children and young people.

The campaign under the banner of "Unite for children, Unite Against AIDS", now in its second year, uses world class cricket to reach millions of people, including children themselves, policy makers and other role players in the fight against HIV and AIDS.

The "Unite for Children, Unite Against AIDS" campaign stresses the unacceptable levels of HIV and AIDS prevalence among children and young people. It also makes a call to action to de-stigmatise the AIDS epidemic and shows how the values of cricket are applicable responses to AIDS while giving greater visibility to children living with and affected by AIDS.

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The backdrop to the campaign are staggering numbers of more than 1000 children under 15 dying from AIDS-related diseases every 24 hours. So, far more than 15 million children have lost one or both parents to HIV and AIDS.

Sangakkara is expected to be accompanied by team mates, Chamara Silva, Upul Tharanga and Dilhara Fernando.

The four players, who are members of the Sri Lanka squad keen to improve on their runners-up spot which they achieved at the ICC Cricket World Cup 2007, are expected to highlight the values of the spirit of cricket that are seen as an appropriate response to aid the fight against HIV and AIDS.

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